

**TIP**

## Help Prevent Infections

- ❖ **Wash your hands** – it's the best way to prevent the spread of infection.
- ❖ Remind health care providers to wash their hands before they care for you.
- ❖ Keep wounds clean and dry.

**TIP**

## Reduce Your Risk of Falls at Home and in the Hospital

- ❖ Speak with your provider about your risk of falling.
- ❖ Learn to properly use aids such as walkers and wheelchairs.
- ❖ Know the effect your medicine could have on your ability to walk, such as producing dizziness or confusion.

## VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network

Patient Safety Points of Contact		
Medical Center	Point of Contact	Telephone Number
Altoona	Connee Heim	814-943-8164 ext. 7188
Butler	Diana Toy	724-285-2596
Clarksburg	Dr. Richard Kaufmann	304-623-3461 ext. 3745
Coatesville	Warren Medina-Riutort	610-384-7711 ext. 3831
Erie	Ann Schlimm	814-860-2222
Lebanon	Christine Billings	717-272-6621 ext. 4080
Philadelphia	Catherine Fox	215-823-5219
Pittsburgh	Barbara Forsha	412-365-4058
Wilkes-Barre	Roxie Jones	570-824-3521 ext. 4979
Wilmington	Roseann Hiltner	302-994-2511 ext. 4564

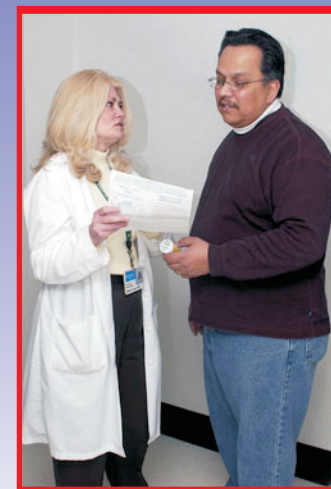
**Network Patient Safety Officer**  
**Moira M. Hughes**  
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Prepared by Medical Media, VAMC, Coatesville, PA - 3/06

# Improving Patient Safety

## Here's How YOU Can Help



## VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Improving Patient Safety

## ACTIVELY Participate in Your Care

Patient safety is one of VA's top priorities. VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network facilities and staff are involved in an ongoing effort to keep our patients safe. You and your family can also play a vital role in this process. For example, by becoming an active and informed participant in your health care, you can help prevent health care errors.

On the following pages, you will find several patient safety tips. As you read them, *remember that communication between you and your health care team is vitally important to promoting your safety.* Also, please be sure to report any safety concerns you may have to a member of that team as soon as possible.

## Patient Safety Tips

**TIP**

### Share Your Health History and Information with Your Health Care Provider

Write this down, and take it with you. Include current information such as:

- ✓ Allergies (food, chemicals, medicines, etc.)
- ✓ Existing health conditions, recent diagnostic procedures, past surgeries, etc.
- ✓ Name of your primary care provider and next-of-kin contact information
- ✓ Medications: prescription and over-the-counter (such as cough syrup)
  - ✦ What kind? ✦ Why taken?
  - ✦ How much? ✦ How often?
- ✓ Vitamins
- ✓ Natural substances or herbal medications (such as ginseng)



**TIP**

### Ask Your Health Care Provider Questions

- ❖ Don't recognize a medication? **ASK** your provider to check before you take it.
- ❖ Don't understand your care or treatment? **ASK** your provider to explain your treatment or exam to you before you leave the appointment. If you still have concerns, *ask* again.



**TIP**

### Stay Involved in Your Care

- ❖ Learn about your diagnosis. Become active in your treatment plan.
- ❖ Nervous before a visit? Write down questions ahead of time and, if possible, bring a family member or friend to your appointment.
- ❖ Keep the written instructions for taking medications and the date/time of follow-up appointments.